UNITED NATIONS **E**

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/ICEF/1993/SR.4
17 August 1993
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

EXECUTIVE BOARD

1993 Regular Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 26 April 1993, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. WARD (Canada)

CONTENTS

Opening statements by the Chairman of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund

Adoption of the agenda

General debate

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Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

OPENING STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that universal child immunization, the World Summit for Children, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and education for all were only a few examples of activities undertaken by UNICEF. The accomplishments in each of those areas bore witness to the efforts exerted by the developing countries and to the dedication of UNICEF staff.

2. On his visit to China and India in January 1993, he had had an opportunity to see how UNICEF-supported programmes were being implemented in those countries. During his visit he had met many officials, and above all, ordinary people who were benefiting directly from UNICEF and who had asked him to tell the Board that UNICEF was making a difference.

3. Before leaving, he had known that one third of the children born annually were born in India or China, countries where UNICEF had its largest programmes. However, he had not known that for each dollar spent by UNICEF for the implementation of its programmes, the Chinese and Indian Governments provided 7 dollars, which clearly showed that the role of UNICEF was to supply the technical and financial assistance necessary for starting programmes; the implementation of those programmes was then the business of Governments or NGOs. A common methodology was for UNICEF to train a small team of trainers at the national level, who then transmitted the knowledge they had acquired to others. That so-called "echo" approach made it possible to provide thousands of teachers and health officers at modest cost. Service delivery could thus be seen to be supporting the strategic objectives of capacity-building and empowerment.

4. UNICEF was providing China with $1 million worth of aid to strengthen basic education in the poorest areas. It had thus been possible to train 1.17 million in-service teachers, 54,000 new teachers and provide 26,000 copies of teaching materials. In a model school in Shuang Bai County, parents took classes themselves and paid 55 per cent of the teachers' salaries. In other areas, despite difficult accessibility, enrolment rates were 99 per cent for boys and 96 per cent for girls, which indicated the high priority that the children, parents and the Government placed on education.

5. In an area of Rajasthan, India, he had met a women's group which was grateful to UNICEF for having helped them to defend their rights. Whatever injustices they had suffered, literary and numeracy skills, shared information and the social support of the group had enabled them to defend their rights.

6. By recognizing the usefulness and the mobilizing power of the global goals of UNICEF, India and China had made them a source of inspiration and a standard of reference at the national level.

7. There was, of course, still room for improvement: in India, the status of women needed changing, which should be done by promoting school attendance for young girls and by discouraging early marriages and childbirths; in China, the maternal child health and immunization infrastructures might be integrated.

(The Chairman)

8. For the members of the Executive Board, visiting places where programmes were being implemented was a rewarding experience: by seeing for themselves what the needs and difficulties were in situ, they were in a better position to take the necessary political and financial decisions.

9. In that connection, one was forced to conclude that the financial resources were hardly encouraging: the "peace dividend" had not materialized, and growing civil unrest and the global recession had taken their toll. To make things worse, the repeated images of human tragedy in the media had reinforced the impression that "aid does not work". The specialists and those concerned knew what progress had been achieved, but how could the general public be convinced of the usefulness and effectiveness of international aid? UNICEF, one of the best-known and most respected United Nations agencies, had a unique role to play, namely, to tell the world that international aid was effective and that such aid was not welfare but an investment in the future of humanity.

10. In closing, he presented the programme of work for the current session, i.e. to define a clear position for UNICEF within an evolving United Nations system; to set a framework for UNICEF programmes in the newly independent States; to find better ways of meeting children's needs wherever circumstances required; and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of UNICEF in order to obtain the maximum benefit from its available resources.

11. Mr. GRANT (Executive Director of UNICEF) called for a moment of silence in honour of the advocates for children who had died in the past year. In particular, he drew attention to six UNICEF staff members who had been killed in the line of duty, as well as to Ms. Audrey Hepburn, Mr. Okita of the Japanese Committee for UNICEF and Mr. Bruce of the United States Committee for UNICEF.

12. He stressed the importance of the current session, which was meeting at a time of global apprehension over many world events, and reminded the members of the Board that the decisions they would take, particularly regarding financial allocations, would have a decisive impact on the efforts of UNICEF world wide.

13. The current period was unique in that, for the first time in history, society had the capacity to ensure the basic human needs of every person on the planet. Global progress since 1950 had been immense: the great colonial empires had collapsed, spawning a vast proliferation of new nation States. Democracy was taking root in virtually all the countries emerging from the old order; three quarters of the world's population now enjoyed the basics of a life of dignity, productivity and health; since 1945, average real incomes had more than doubled in the developing world, where three quarters of the children attended school; infant and child mortality had been reduced by half; the percentage of rural families with access to safe water had risen from less than 10 per cent to almost 60 per cent. At present, the majority of the world's people enjoyed Franklin Roosevelt's Four Freedoms: freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom from want and freedom from fear.

14. Furthermore, people had learned how much could be done even in difficult times. Global development was so changing the world that new opportunities, the significance of which was not always obvious, were constantly arising. In the

(Mr. Grant)

1960s, the "green revolution" had helped much of Asia to increase its production of wheat and rice spectacularly. Other, equally dramatic revolutions were under way: 80 per cent of children aged one year and under in the developing world had been immunized, and one third of the world's families practised oral rehydration therapy. Those two factors alone were saving the lives of 4 million children annually. The reasons behind those results, which had been achieved despite unfavourable economic conditions, exorbitant debt service and even civil conflicts, were the same as those which had made the "green revolution" possible: technological progress, a change in outlook brought about by the media and schools, and a stronger political will.

15. That progress, in turn, brought about positive change in public attitudes towards children. Few would have predicted, only five years previously, that the first truly global summit would be convened in the name of children or that the Convention on the Rights of the Child would be ratified by so many countries, and so rapidly.

16. Furthermore, the successful achievement by the year 2000 of the goals identified at the World Summit for Children would have a profound effect at the global level; the population and environmental challenges which threatened to overwhelm the earth's capacity would diminish; the empowerment of people would lead to a strengthening of democracy and economic growth; and with ill health and illiteracy brought under control, the world would have laid the basis for overcoming the worst aspects of mass poverty. As the Secretary-General had recently stressed, the three great priorities for the United Nations - peace, development and democracy - were interlocked.

17. Within that context, he drew the attention of Board members to a number of points he had highlighted in his report (E/ICEF/1993/2). First, there were the national, racial, ethnic and religious conflicts breaking out all over the world, which caused immense suffering for women and children. In the face of the atrocities which occurred, UNICEF and the international community must seek to persuade the conflicting parties to show restraint so as to enable assistance to reach children. They must also ensure that the increasingly successful efforts that were being made to confront the "silent" emergencies afflicting children were not overwhelmed by the need to respond to urgent "loud" emergencies. The latter type of intervention, as in Somalia recently, was an indication that the times had changed. The international community no longer wished to be reduced to the role of a "witness to horror" and was determined to defend children's and their families' right to food even in times of conflict.

18. The organizations of the system were being called upon increasingly. That was an encouraging but also a frightening trend because the financial, technical and other resources of the system were limited.

19. When national plans of action were being prepared it had become clear that it would be useful to identify intermediate goals. If those objectives were achieved by 1995, then as of 1996, the lives of more than one million children a year would be saved in South Asia and Africa.

(Mr. Grant)

20. The achievement of those goals would require increased resources; however, the necessary amounts - approximately $25 billion per year - were not impossible to obtain. If developing countries restructured their budgets so as to assure at least 20 per cent for priority social sector needs, and if the developed countries increased official development assistance so as to assure that 20 per cent was devoted to human priority concerns, the world would be close to providing the needed $25 billion. For the United States of America that increase would represent an additional amount of $2 billion, or the equivalent of what Americans spent every month on beer. For Europeans, the increase in assistance would represent an amount that was less than what they spent every month on cigarettes. In November 1992, the participants at the International Conference on Assistance to the African Child (ICAAC) had agreed that that target was not an impossibility. It was therefore extremely disturbing that several Governments which had traditionally been among the largest donors had found it necessary to reduce their official development assistance (ODA) as a result of severe economic pressures. It was to be hoped that they would not be imitated by other donors and that the restrictions would be strictly temporary. In accordance with the principle "first call for children", the essential needs of children must be given high priority in bad as well as good times. Furthermore, it was essential to resolve the problem of debt. In sub-Saharan Africa, external debt exceeded the combined gross national product of the countries in the region. That burden, together with the continuing decline of commodity prices, was undermining hopes for recovery in many African countries. The topic should be included in the agenda of the next summit of the "group of seven" industrialized countries, since a significant part (39 per cent) of the debt was bilateral.

21. Everyone recognized the importance of basic education for economic growth, as demonstrated by the substantial increase in loans for education from international financial institutions and the many countries which were planning curriculum reform and other structural changes. In order to achieve decisive progress in basic education and literacy, UNICEF and UNESCO had sponsored a new initiative, which was being conducted in the nine developing countries with the largest child populations. An important summit of the Heads of State or Government of those nine countries was scheduled to be held in India in November 1993.

22. Among the major management issues which the Board would need to consider, the most immediate was that of the revised 1992-1993 budget and the proposed 1994-1995 budget on which the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had made comments. Those budgets had been developed in accordance with the specifications established by the Board as a result of the reference group's work. The second question concerned the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 on the operational activities for development of the United Nations system. The third was the recent multi-donor evaluation of UNICEF, on which members might wish to comment. The fourth was the question of an overall management survey of UNICEF. A decision on that issue might need to be deferred in order to take into account the decisions to be taken at the next session of the General Assembly on the reform of the structures and governance of United Nations organizations. The fifth and final issue concerned the possible transfer of UNICEF headquarters to New Rochelle.

(Mr. Grant)

23. In conclusion, he stressed the need to continue engaging in advocacy on behalf of children. The world must understand the extent to which goals for children complemented many other human objectives. To serve the cause of children was also to serve the causes of the environment, democracy and human rights, and women and development.

Election of the Vice-Chairman of the Programme Committee

24. The CHAIRMAN said that the Asian Group in the Board had put forward the candidacy of Mr. Afgan Khan, Minister and Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, for the post of Vice-Chairman of the Programme Committee. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Council approved the candidacy.

25. It was so decided.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

26. The agenda was adopted.

Maurice Pate Award

27. The CHAIRMAN said that the Governor of the State of Ceará (Brazil), Mr. Ciro Gómez, would receive the 1993 Maurice Pate Award on behalf of the State of Ceará and its population.

GENERAL DEBATE

28. Mrs. MUÑOZ DE GAVIRIA (Colombia), speaking as First Lady and representative of her country, said that, although some Latin American and Caribbean countries had succeeded in boosting economic growth, poverty continued to affect them, often concealed by economic statistics and national averages. Governments and societies should strive for a fair distribution of income and increased social equity, with a view in particular to enhancing the health, level of education and standard of living of the 80 million children living in poverty in the region (more than a million children under the age of five died each year in Latin America). UNICEF had played an important role in the region through its funding of programmes to reduce infant mortality and improve the quality of life of children. That cooperation should be pursued. Although the importance of emergency operations should not be underestimated, it would be regrettable if they were funded to the detriment of cooperation. UNICEF, which devoted only 9 per cent of its resources to the region, should increase its aid.

29. Her Government was making progress in achieving the objectives it had set for modernizing State structures and combating poverty. The 1991 Constitution established the primacy of children's rights and, in the interests of efficiency, the Government had begun to decentralize action in favour of children. Results had already been achieved: a sharp decline in infant mortality, universal vaccination (there had been no new cases of poliomyelitis for 21 months), progress in oral rehydration and breast-feeding, the adoption by 31 establishments of the standards used in the "baby-friendly" hospitals,

(Mrs. Muñoz de Gaviria)

extension of health care to treat 1.5 million children under the age of six, and basic education for 80 per cent of the population, together with an increase in staff resources in the secondary education sector. Progress had also been made in the distribution of drinking water, the establishment of "people's kitchens", perinatal care and civil registration. With its "Escuela nueva" programme to develop education in rural areas, her country was even in a position to provide technical assistance to other countries. Although it allocated 36.7 per cent of public revenue and 9.06 per cent of GDP to social investment, her country still needed technical and financial aid from the international community to curb poverty and consolidate the results it had achieved, particularly as its efforts to combat drug traffickers absorbed 4 per cent of its GDP. Drug consumption in the developed countries was jeopardizing the future of hundreds of thousands of Colombian children.

30. Turning to the subjects to be dealt with at the current session, she stressed that UNICEF should further develop its family-planning and sex-education programmes, so as to reach the poorest of the poor and reduce the incidence of premature or unwanted pregnancies, which often led to the abandonment of children and juvenile prostitution. She welcomed UNICEF's contribution of information and prevention programmes on AIDS. Although infant mortality and morbidity rates had declined in the region, it was tragic that the number of deaths from AIDS had increased, as had the incidence of HIV-infected children.

31. She welcomed the fact that the Fund's cooperation programmes were taking account of the link between poverty and the environment, a connection that was highlighted in the Agenda 21 programme. She also noted that the national programmes of action (of which 23 had been established in Latin America and the Caribbean) had encouraged many public and private leading figures to uphold the cause of children. Her country was preparing to host the second continental meeting for monitoring the actions taken by countries to achieve the objectives set for 1995 and from the present until the year 2000, due to be held in October 1993. In addition, the First Ladies of the countries of the region were to hold their third meeting in Costa Rica on the subject of the family.

32. She urged the Executive Board of UNICEF to endorse the recommendation on the allocation of additional resources for the period 1993-1997 to enable the Programme for the Andean Region (PROANDES) to be continued. In that connection, she thanked the Spanish Committee for UNICEF, and the Belgian, Canadian, Dutch and Swedish Governments, for the aid they had given to the programme. She also welcomed the contribution made by the Special Adjustment Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean in strengthening institutions and devising new projects, and she supported the allocation of $7 million from the general action funds for the period 1994-1995.

33. Mrs. NORDHEIM-LARSEN (Norway) said that the suffering endured by so many children in Somalia, South Africa and the ex-Yugoslavia should not obscure the fact that substantial progress had been made. Concrete measures had been taken to implement the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children, while the 1993 report on the State of the World's Children highlighted the opportunities available for improving the lot of infants. Many national plans in favour of

(Mrs. Nordheim-Larsen, Norway)

children had been presented at the International Donors' Conference on assistance to African children, held in Dakar in November 1992. However, redirecting funding towards priority human objectives was not sufficient. The most effective strategies and methods must be applied. Her Government hoped that the efforts to assist children, promised by the African Governments at the Conference, would come to fruition. It was also willing to provide aid for implementing national plans and would launch a fresh appeal to other donor countries to increase their contributions to women and children, particularly in the UNICEF framework. If they were to succeed, measures in favour of children should form an integral part of national development programmes and, if they were to have lasting effects, they must be accompanied by a rational economic policy, sound conduct of public affairs and measures to ensure transparency.

34. The multi-donor evaluation of UNICEF drawn up by a number of donor countries (E/ICEF/1993/CRP.7) clearly showed that, although the Fund was a summum bonum, it nevertheless had to work together with the other aid organizations. It must also avoid the danger posed by the creation of parallel structures within individual countries. In addition, it should take account of the context in which its programmes operated, since the magnitude of the resources it injected into the poorest countries could lead to a change in national priorities. The Fund must confine its action to a limited number of areas and, in particular, ensure a more effective deployment of tasks among the various aid organizations. In the family-planning sector, for example, the activities of UNICEF should not overlap with those of UNFPA and WHO. The same was true of measures to combat AIDS, a field in which WHO, UNESCO and UNDP were also active. With regard to AIDS, it was essential for UNICEF to continue developing strategies to care for and protect children affected by the disease, and play an active part in efforts to inform young people directly, before their first sexual contacts. The United Nations agencies, including UNICEF, must coordinate their actions more effectively. That could be done without any of the agencies concerned being weakened or losing its identity. Indeed, progress had been made in that field in recent years.

35. The authors of the evaluation report emphasized the need for UNICEF to improve its accountability in a broad sense. Constraints on UNICEF's resources required it to draft reports which were easy to read and helped others to understand what it actually did in the field. Her delegation wanted the Fund to elaborate on its activities for women, especially mothers. According to the authors of the evaluation report, it appeared that the programme integration strategy had been used as an excuse for reducing the resources allocated for matters of importance for women. There should be a balance between UNICEF's service delivery, its promotion of capacity-building and its advocacy for children's rights. Lastly, the Fund must strengthen its role as a "critical partner" while never losing sight of the fact that assistance for children and women was its trade mark, particularly in low-income countries. On the whole, her delegation considered that the conclusions of the evaluation reports were encouraging.

36. Ms. POULSEN (Denmark) said that, of the principal subjects covered in UNICEF's independent evaluation made by several donors, the first of all should be accountability. UNICEF had to report not only on the efficiency and effectiveness of its activities but also on its financial accountability.

37. The country programmes were the backbone of all UNICEF's work. It was, therefore, important that their formulation should take place through as open, systematic and transparent a process as possible, while bearing in mind the specific situation of each country. A thorough review of ongoing activities and continuous consideration of the appropriateness of intervention strategies must be fully integrated into the country programming process. Each programme should clearly show the choice of its activities, its intervention models (services, capability building and accountability) and the combination thereof both to those responsible for approving the country programmes, i.e., the Executive Board, and to UNICEF's partners throughout the country concerned.

38. UNICEF's intervention strategies raised important programme and policy issues. In the area of service delivery, UNICEF had been carrying out activities such as vaccination campaigns which had reached vast numbers of children. The Danish Government, however, continued to be deeply concerned that such vertical programmes, with their heavy emphasis on reaching certain quantifiable goals within somewhat arbitrarily fixed time-limits, might not be realistic. UNICEF should further increase its involvement in national capacity-building in the sectors which it supported. That was a long-term endeavour for which no fixed time-limit could or should be set.

39. "Accountability" or "empowerment" was a rather vague term which should be given a common definition. Her delegation felt that "empowerment" should be more than mere community participation. It should, in fact, enable UNICEF's target groups to define their rights and demand that they be respected. It was a difficult process, but UNICEF's mandate obliged it not to content itself with directing its efforts to the survival of women and children. It should protect their rights and improve their quality of life.

40. As for UNICEF's financial accountability, her delegation, like many others, had consistently called for greater coherence and transparency in the presentation of the Fund's budgets. Of course, since the Budget Format Reference Group's recommendations had been applied, the budget document was more user-friendly. There was a clear link between the administrative and programme support budget and the global funds budget, although further improvements were possible. Her delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that an operational linkage be established between the two types of budgets and that it might very well be accomplished by consolidating both budgets into a single document.

41. The need for a more precise definition of administrative and programme costs was emphasized both in the evaluation and in the Advisory Committee's report. It was a matter of forming a full and comprehensive picture of the costs incurred by UNICEF in its activities and, hence, of the amount of resources actually available for country programmes. Without clear definitions it was difficult to demonstrate to its donors, as well as to recipient Governments, what funds entrusted to UNICEF were used most efficiently.

(Ms. Poulsen, Denmark)

42. Accountability began first of all with the Executive Board. The restructuring of United Nations operational activities should be manifested not only by reducing the number of members of the Executive Board but also by reforming the governance of the Fund. The body entrusted to administer the Fund must primarily provide firm political support to UNICEF in the activities emanating from its mandate, give clear policy guidance to UNICEF management, including questions dealing with country programmes and other programme matters, and exercise financial control.

43. Independent evaluation underlined the importance of monitoring and evaluation. Her delegation welcomed the Executive Director's statement that UNICEF supported the suggestion for an enhanced evaluation in a way which placed emphasis on the effects of programmes, including country programmes. That procedure had been insufficiently emphasized in the past. There was frequently a lack of independent studies on the long-term effects of UNICEF-funded interventions. She noted with satisfaction that the overall country programme evaluation component would from that point be an integral part of the country-programming exercise. The use of independent outside consultants could be very worth while in clarifying how the country programming actually worked and in showing how it might be improved. Such studies, undertaken from time to time in the context of selected country programmes, could become part of UNICEF's regular work in assessing its own performance.

44. Mr. OSVALD (Sweden) paid a tribute to the UNICEF staff who had lost their lives while serving in emergency operations in Somalia and the Sudan.

45. His Government not only continued to be one of the Organization's major donors but was also very concerned about its future. Within that context, he welcomed the efforts to restructure and revitalize the economic and social sectors of the United Nations, efforts which, in the last instance, should ensure that assistance funding was both reliable and continuous.

46. His delegation noted with interest the independent evaluation of UNICEF (E/ICEF/1993/CRP.7) carried out by several donors in close cooperation with the Fund's secretariat. That evaluation highlighted the three major intervention strategies that focused UNICEF'S activities on children: service delivery, capacity-building and empowerment.

47. UNICEF played an important role in the humanitarian relief efforts. His Government had consistently underlined the need to adopt a system-wide approach in order to save lives in complex emergency situations. He welcomed UNICEF's active participation in that work at the structural and operational levels.

48. The Convention on the Rights of the Child had broadened the Fund's agenda of activities. It was high time to defend the rights of children in particularly difficult situations - children living in war zones, street children and children forced into prostitution. While engaged in those activities, the Fund must, of course, be a favoured and a critical partner to Governments. It must also contribute to improving the condition of women by integrating questions concerning them into all the programmes and policies which it supported.

(Mr. Osvald, Sweden)

49. The right to reproductive health must be respected. In most cultures, adolescents, for instance, were denied access to programmes on sexual health and reproductive behaviour. Reluctance to integrate AIDS-prevention measures into ongoing programmes was noted although an ever-increasing number of countries were forced to confront that immense problem. The maternal mortality rate was still very high in many developing countries. There was a need for UNICEF to develop its policy in those areas where it had definite comparative advantages. In addition, the need for linking environmental concerns emanating from environmental degradation to an active and flexible development strategy for children, youth and women could not be stressed enough.

50. The upheavals in Europe had resulted in the demand for organizations of the United Nations system, including UNICEF, to focus on new needs. Some of the newly independent States faced the problem of poverty and were the scene of conflicts. There was a need for an international response to that. His delegation welcomed the fact that the United Nations planned to tackle the problem with a united and integrated approach. Assistance to Central and Eastern Europe and to some of the newly independent States should focus on humanitarian action and short-term strategies. What many of those countries lacked today was an efficient distribution system and the methods to empower women and children. However, the primary role for United Nations agencies was to stay with the developing countries on the road to development.

51. There had been, undeniably, a transfer of tasks from the United Nations to the Bretton Woods institutions. The United Nations should be the driving force in development and its organs must work for that. Both financial resources and a strong, relevant policy were needed in international development cooperation. That meant specifically that UNICEF, together with Governments, non-governmental organizations and other concerned parties, should focus its efforts on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and on achieving the objectives of the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children. His delegation urged all countries to make their contributions. Poorer countries could do so with an appropriate reallocation of resources, and richer countries by a broader financial commitment.

52. Mrs. FRECHETTE (Canada) said that over the past year UNICEF had responded to complex emergency situations in extremely difficult circumstances. Having become targets, several members of its staff had paid for their devotion with their lives. That situation was intolerable and provoked the indignation of the international community.

53. Reform of the entire United Nations development system would require modification and change of UNICEF, and it was the responsibility of both the Board and the secretariat to rise to the challenge. Although it was nearly a 1 billion dollar development agency, the Fund faced increasingly complex demands and its funds were limited. In order to deliver on its mandate effectively, it would have to make some strategic operational choices and ensure that it was not just doing its job well but doing the right job. Moreover, the Fund must identify as comprehensively as possible all partners to which it was accountable and must be able to justify the choices it had made.

(Mrs. Frechette, Canada)

54. The independent evaluation report (E/ICEF/1993/CRP.7) had made it clear that the Executive Board had to consider its strategic choices carefully: delivery of basic services, capacity-building and advocacy on behalf of women and children. Her delegation's view was that the choices were best made at the country level and it fully endorsed the recommendation of the evaluation team which had stated that UNICEF should include an annex in every country programme coming for Board approval, precisely justifying the mix of the various types of action proposed. Her delegation welcomed the fact that UNICEF had already made some efforts in that direction by including such clarification in the country programmes submitted for Board approval during the current session.

55. As regarded what the Fund's overall strategic direction should be in the future, her delegation contended that UNICEF would be able to claim it had been effective only if it could move beyond the direct delivery of basic services. Its action should be increasingly oriented towards capacity-building. As concerned empowerment of target groups, UNICEF would have to place more emphasis on advocacy on behalf of those groups.

56. To the extent that primacy of action was given to the country level, global goal funds were significant only as a correlation of how they reinforced or improved country programmes. Global goal funds should not be in competition with those allocated for country programmes. UNICEF should avoid focusing attention on achievement of specific results proposed to everyone, which sometimes resulted in overly exclusive concentration on delivery of basic services.

57. Although UNICEF was primarily a development agency, it played an important role in emergencies. Actually UNICEF was faced with two types of emergencies: "loud" emergencies, i.e. immediate ones handled through the emergency budget reserved for emergency assistance and ever-increasing "silent" emergencies which had to be faced by drawing funds from its development budget. UNICEF must ensure that the emergency situations which were too often hidden should not be forgotten.

58. It was necessary to clarify the extent to which UNICEF's relatively scarce development funds could or should be used for emergencies. For that, it was necessary to review how many more funds and special donations could be attracted for that goal.

59. It was also necessary to do everything possible to promote greater humanitarian assistance cooperation within the entire United Nations system under the leadership of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. The various United Nations agencies likely to intervene on site, including UNICEF, must contribute to strengthening the various tools of action placed at the Centre's disposal. They must channel their information to the Centre so that it might effectively fulfil its specific role of coordination and distribution of the information. UNICEF must participate in that action.

60. Restructuring of the United Nations would force the Executive Board to review its mandate, structure and operation. UNICEF would need to look at its obligations on both the programme and financial sides. The Fund should be able to demonstrate that it understood how to maintain a proper balance of its three

(Mrs. Frechette, Canada)

intervention strategies at the country programme level. It must propose benchmarks and define criteria which would permit it to verify the implementation of country programmes approved by the Executive Board and ensure follow-up for its decisions. On the financial side, UNICEF must be able to account to its various donors for management of its annual budget. As a way of defining UNICEF's various obligations, an appropriate process should be put in place. Such a task might well be the most useful output one could ask of its administrative and management review. It was clear that, in any case, a better framework for defining UNICEF's accountability would better permit the Fund to set strategic directions for itself and lead to improved planning of action it might take.

61. Mrs. MBELLA NGOMBA (Cameroon) paid tribute to the UNICEF staff members who had lost their lives serving the cause of children.

62. She recalled the main goals UNICEF had set for itself - primary health care, adequate nutrition, water supply and sanitation, basic education for all, timely and adequate response to emergencies, the empowerment of women and the conservation of the environment - all of which must be achieved through programmes whose implementation required the cooperation of the international community. As the Secretary-General had pointed out, the world was growing weary of the task. He had even spoken of a crisis of cooperation. Against that background, it was extremely important to provide guidance to UNICEF on how to maximize the results of its efforts for the survival, protection and development of children in the 1990s. In the view of her delegation, UNICEF must at the national level continue to emphasize participation by the people. Local capacity-building and the empowerment of beneficiaries in order to ensure sustainable programmes must be the UNICEF country objectives. Her delegation therefore supported the decentralization of programmes in the field and the participation of local authorities and communities in their implementation.

63. Cameroon had already adopted that approach. Recently, her Government had decentralized the University of Yaoundé and created seven new universities in the provinces, which tailored their educational priorities to the needs and aspirations of their communities. Her delegation perceived decentralization as a crucial element in sustaining a dialogue between a government and its people and ultimately between a nation and its partners. UNICEF must support that trend.

64. The principles of capacity-building and empowerment must also be brought to bear regionally and subregionally. The United Nations agencies must support efforts in that direction. The International Conference on Assistance to African Children held in Dakar in November 1992 under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and UNICEF had been a major initiative by African countries to coordinate with the donor community in financing and implementing the goals set by the World Summit for Children. The "Consensus of Dakar" adopted at the close of that Conference testified to the fact that it was possible to forge a common strategy on the matter. In the Consensus, African countries had made a commitment to restructure their budgetary expenditure so as to release at least 20 per cent of their funds to social development programmes, while the donors had been called upon to increase their official development

(Mrs. Mbella Ngomba, Cameroon)

assistance (ODA) to 20 per cent. UNICEF had stated that such financing in equal shares would provide the $25 billion per year needed to allow most of the world's people to enjoy decent living conditions by the end of the century. A number of donor and recipient countries had pledged to strive for that goal. On the other hand, certain donors had announced reductions in their contributions owing to economic pressure. Her delegation hoped that such reductions were only temporary and would not constitute a precedent.

65. Her delegation would also like to advocate another essential element of the Consensus of Dakar, namely, debt swaps for the release of resources to finance social development programmes. She hoped that the donors and the international financial institutions would consider that option in bilateral and multilateral negotiations especially during the meetings of the seven major industrialized countries and the forthcoming meeting on African development to be held in Tokyo, Japan. She also hoped that UNICEF would reinforce its cooperation with OAU, the African Development Bank (ADB) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

66. She recalled that the General Assembly had recommended closer coordination of international development operations and had accordingly advocated strengthening the post of resident representative or resident coordinator of United Nations agencies in the field. The Assembly had even recommended the establishment of common premises for United Nations agencies in the countries. Her delegation supported the principle of a coordinated United Nations presence in the field, provided that each agency retained its own identity and that additional bureaucracy was not created. The issue of common premises should be approached on a case-by-case basis, depending on what the Governments of the host countries could offer.

67. A multi-donor evaluation of UNICEF seemed to indicate that the agency should play a more critical role in its partnership with developing countries. In the view of her delegation, it was extremely important for UNICEF to stay above politics in order not to erode its moral authority.

68. Her delegation attached great importance to strengthening the external relations of UNICEF so that it could mobilize more actively on behalf of children and women. Initiatives like the commemoration of the Day of the African Child on 16 June, or the inclusion of children's issues in the agenda of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development the previous year, should be emulated at the forthcoming conferences on human rights, population, social development and women.

69. Mrs. BREALEY (Costa Rica) noted that, one year after the World Summit for Children, the leaders of six Central American countries had met in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, to ratify their national plans of action for human development, children and young people. That meeting had resulted in the establishment of the Regional Commission for Social Affairs, composed of the First Ladies and the Ministers of Social Welfare of the six countries in question. The Commission has been working ever since to define a regional social policy.

70. In Costa Rica itself, the new social policy was being formulated and the goal was to achieve growth in all sectors on the one hand and a more equitable

(Mrs. Brealey, Costa Rica)

distribution of resources on the other. Social development had always been one of her Government's major concerns: 48 per cent of the national budget was allocated to social programmes, representing about 20 per cent of the country's gross domestic product. Despite the serious crisis it had experienced and the adjustment programme it had been forced to adopt, Costa Rica had in 1992 recorded the lowest infant mortality rate in its history: 13.2 per thousand live births. Furthermore, Costa Rica was fortunate to have obtained two loans for education and health, amounting in all to approximately $100 million, and to have done so after more than 10 years during which there had been almost no investment in those two sectors. Economic recovery was currently under way in Costa Rica and it was going to be possible to expand investment in the social sector, meaning investment in human capital. The country's social policy was deliberately focused on children as the basis of its future development. In accordance with that policy, special attention was given to minors working in urban and rural areas. Furthermore, Costa Rica had adopted a planning strategy at the local level that fully integrated the communities with non-governmental organizations and State institutions. That strategy reflected the decentralization policy adopted by the country. Taking the long-standing collaboration with UNICEF and the private sector as a model, the policy was built on the need to set aside short-term views, narrowly targeted or fragmented assistance, and programmes totally unrelated to the actual situation in the country. Costa Rica expected the United Nations agencies to support its action at a time when the country was still vulnerable. It hoped especially that the Special Adjustment Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean would continue to assist the Latin American countries that, like Costa Rica, were compelled to make macroeconomic adjustments, in identifying strategies for making the most of the limited resources at their disposal, as rational as possible. As it formulated its new social policy, Costa Rica had attracted the interest of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which had decided to support the country's efforts. IDB aid should allow Costa Rica to devise adequate responses to the problems of poverty, social violence, discontent and inequitable distribution of the fruits of development.

71. While her delegation welcomed the progress made on children's issues by the various cooperation agencies, especially UNICEF, as described by the Executive Director in his opening statement, it nevertheless believed that the Executive Board must at the current session try to understand why fundamental problems like poverty and violence in its various forms still persisted and were even worsening. Moreover, although it recognized the need for international assistance in all kinds of emergencies, Costa Rica felt that more funds should be devoted to follow-up activities once the immediate emergency had passed. In short, humanitarian assistance of a transitional nature would not suffice. Solid groundwork must be laid to allow millions of families to extricate themselves from conditions of poverty and malnutrition. In that context, her delegation asked the United Nations agencies to give energetic support to the developing countries in their struggle to obtain, among other things, just prices for their products, the lifting of obstacles to the export of those products, and the possibility of creating jobs and devising social programmes without having to depend on international charity. The developing countries wanted a sustainable development based on social justice.

(Mrs. Brealey, Costa Rica)

72. In short, what Latin American countries needed was concerted action to enable them to consolidate gains already made and to make progress in specific areas. For example, they should be able to develop the tools that would enable them to select recipients, establish indicators at the local level and evaluate the impact of social programmes.

73. In conclusion, the delegation of Costa Rica recommended the following guidelines for adoption by the Executive Board: defining social policies to guarantee equality; ensuring the integration of international cooperation within the framework of national action programmes in order to complement efforts at the national and regional levels; emphasizing integrated children's aid to highlight programmes for children in especially difficult circumstances, such as working children; urging United Nations bodies to bring Governments into the programming process in order to take account of the priorities and characteristics of individual countries; ensuring that poverty reduction programmes would transcend emergency assistance and would become part of a long-term policy; mobilizing resources for Africa and Asia without neglecting the countries of Latin America at a time when they needed international cooperation to keep from returning to the negative conditions they had known in the past (in that regard, the representative of Costa Rica had nothing but praise for the statement of the First Lady of Colombia); urging countries that had not already done so to elaborate national action plans and to make budget allocations for social programmes, as Costa Rica had done; urging United Nations bodies to embark on a process of internal restructuring in order to enhance the economic viability and the effectiveness of their operations throughout the world; ensuring that those same bodies reduced their administrative costs and decentralized their activities by coordinating them with development programmes in each country; assisting countries in promoting active and direct participation by civil society; spreading the idea that attention to the needs of children and young people required a three-sided commitment on the part of the family, the community and governmental institutions; continuing to help countries to take new children's initiatives, such as the group home programme which had been so successful in Latin America.

74. She thanked UNICEF, on behalf of Mrs. Gloria Calderón, First Lady of Costa Rica, for its support for the first meeting of the Regional Commission for Social Affairs, and she requested the Regional Office of UNICEF to provide the same support for the upcoming meeting of the Commission in San José (Costa Rica) in September 1993.

75. Mr. MARUYAMA (Japan) praised UNICEF for the timeliness of its emergency interventions in 1992. He recalled that, in that year, expenditures for emergency programmes had reached a new record of 22 per cent of the total UNICEF budget. The Fund had provided assistance for children and mothers in 56 countries affected by natural disasters or by crises caused by armed conflict. In many cases, for example, in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia, the Fund had mounted large-scale, politically complex operations. In doing so, UNICEF had maintained close relations with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations, and he hoped that that partnership would be reinforced in the future. The representative of Japan took the occasion to pay tribute to the four UNICEF staff members who had died carrying out their

(Mr. Maruyama, Japan)

official duties in particularly troubled regions. Their sacrifice was eloquent testimony to the dedication of UNICEF to the cause of children.

76. The Japanese delegation was convinced of the need for the Fund to conduct a continuum of activities from relief to development. He was gratified that the Fund was implementing programmes in more than 130 countries to cope with what had come to be called "silent" emergencies. The unprecedented level of UNICEF income for such purposes (more than $900 million) was proof of the importance the international community attached to the Fund's activities and its willingness to support them.

77. Turning attention to one of the agenda items of the current session, namely, the administrative and programme support budget, the representative of Japan was pleased to note that there had been improvements in the format of the budget. However, in his opinion there was room for still further improvement; specifically, the transparency of the document could be increased. Income projections appeared to be sound. While an effort had clearly been made to curb the trend towards continual budget growth, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) had observed continuing growth of permanent posts at headquarters due to successive reclassifications, as well as a high percentage of project administrator's posts allocated to headquarters. Those trends should be halted. The Japanese delegation looked forward to a response from the secretariat regarding, inter alia, automatic salary increases, the classification of certain posts as permanent and project administrator posts, and the high cost of travel and programme promotion. In that connection, the Japanese delegation supported the suggestion of ACABQ to entrust an independent body with the task promptly carrying out a study of UNICEF operations in order to determine whether those operations were being executed efficiently and whether any improvements in cost-efficiency could be made, in light of the fact that the scale of the operations had increased by a factor of four over what it had been 10 years previously. The evaluation carried out by Australia, Canada, Denmark and Switzerland and the resulting recommendations would be of great interest in that context.

78. His delegation was in favour of the proposal to increase the Emergency Programme Fund in the light of the dramatic increase in emergency expenditures, although he did believe that more use should be made of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund of the Department of Humanitarian Assistance.

79. With respect to the question of headquarters offices, a decision on that matter should be made during the current session after the Executive Board had examined all the advantages and disadvantages, financial and otherwise, of the various options, including the option of maintaining the status quo or transferring a portion of the staff to New Rochelle.

80. UNICEF had taken some commendable initiatives pursuant to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199. In that connection, he drew attention, inter alia, to the idea of a country strategy note and the proposal submitted to the Joint Consultative Group on Policy on common premises and consultations undertaken with all UNICEF representatives with the aim of

(Mr. Maruyama, Japan)

strengthening the resident coordination system. In regard to the General Assembly's review of governance and finance, that question should be examined by the Board.

81. Finally, the representative of Japan recalled that Africa remained the region of highest priority for UNICEF. In 1992, Africa had received the greatest share of UNICEF assistance, accounting for 38 per cent of total programme expenditures. However, according to the UNICEF report, the situation with respect to children and women in Africa had changed hardly at all and had even deteriorated in certain cases. In that connection, the International Conference on Assistance to the African Child, which had been held in December 1992, had been very timely. Japan had joined in the adoption of the "Dakar Consensus", had been extending bilateral assistance to African countries in the fields of education and health and had made special contributions to the specialized agencies of the United Nations system that had been coping with emergencies in Africa, particularly in the Horn of Africa. In that connection, he recalled that the International Conference on African Development would be held in Tokyo in October 1993; the Conference would be an occasion for the international community to reaffirm its commitment to keeping African development at the top of its list of priorities.

82. In conclusion, he wished to reaffirm the commitment of the people and Government of Japan to the goals and activities of UNICEF. The Japanese Government intended to increase its financial contribution to the Fund and would encourage the private sector, whose assistance had reached a level of $16 million in 1992, to do likewise.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.